

FRANK

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Jeff Lovett

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SYNOPSIS: After 145 attempts, mad scientist Dr. Stein has finally created the perfect son and names him Frank. Frank N. Stein. Frank wants to be a normal boy, but soon finds out that fitting in at the local high school is a lot harder than it looks. Frank's quirks attract the affections of Mary Shelley, another student, but they also attract the attention of the school's bullies. After being taunted and pushed one too many times, Frank finally fights back and ends up in Judge Jenny's court along with someone who thinks he's Johnny Depp. When Frank is unable to prove either his identity or citizenship, it's up to Dr. Stein and Mary to rescue Frank from Judge Jenny's courtroom in this fast-paced twist on Mary Shelley's classic story.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(FLEXIBLE CAST OF 16: 5-11 MEN, 5-11 WOMEN)

Dr. Stein (m)The perfect image of a mad scientist complete with graying hair, large spectacles and a dirty lab coat. *(114 lines)*

Frank (m)Dr. Stein's son *(167 lines)*

Henry/Henrietta (m/f)School bully *(66 lines)*

Paul/Paula (m/f)Student *(4 lines)*

Carl/Carla (m/f).....School bully *(30 lines)*

Lester/Leslie (m/f).....School bully *(33 lines)*

Tony (m)School bully *(17 lines)*

Mary Shelley (f).....Frank's friend *(131 lines)*

Sherry (f).....Student *(1 line)*

Shepherd (m).....School police *(23 lines)*

Gabrielle (f).....School police *(32 lines)*

Judge Jenny (f).....The judge *(47 lines)*

Bailiff (m/f).....Judge Jenny's Bailiff *(3 lines)*

Lars (m).....Career criminal *(15 lines)*

Linley (f)Student *(6 lines)*

Brian/Brianna (m or f).....Student *(5 lines)*

Several non-speaking extras

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1: Dr. Stein's laboratory

SCENE 2: School campus

SCENE 3: Dr. Stein's laboratory

SCENE 4: Dr. Stein's laboratory

SCENE 5: School campus

SCENE 6: Courtroom

SCENE 7: School dance

PRODUCTION NOTES

With minor line changes, the characters of Henry, Paul, Carl, Lester, and Brian may all be played by women.

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In the stage directions, Mary is defined as being part of an *Emo Group*. *Emo Group* is a somewhat ambiguous, controversial slang term most frequently used to describe a fashion or subculture which is usually defined to have its roots in punk fashion and subculture, as well as some attributes of gothic fashion and subculture. (www.perfspot.com)

DEDICATION

Frank was written for Drama Camp Productions in Mobile, Alabama who produced the world premiere of this play on June 18, 2009. A special thanks to the producer, Chris Paragone, and the director, Bailey Belanger, for helping make the show a great success.

Jeff Lovett

DO NOT COPY

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

SETTING:

DR. STEIN'S laboratory is downright. Center stage is a cluttered table overflowing with scientific equipment, papers and glass bottles filled with multi-colored liquids. Slightly stage right of the table is a chalkboard which is covered with scientific formulas and drawings of human anatomy. There is a chair beside the chalkboard that is also covered with more papers, empty pizza boxes, containers from various Chinese take-out restaurants and dirty clothes. Stage left of the table is a doctor's privacy curtain.

AT RISE:

As the curtain opens, DR. STEIN enters from stage left carrying two plastic legs from a male mannequin as he hurries across the stage and disappears behind the curtain. A series of strange sounds emerge from behind the curtain including those of a power saw, hammer and what sounds like someone screwing rusty screws into wood. After a moment, DR. STEIN emerges from behind the curtain, empty handed, and exits stage left. He re-enters, this time carrying the mannequin's head by the hair as he crosses and disappears behind the curtain. Again, there are sounds of hammering and sawing. When DR. STEIN finishes hammering, there is the sound of electricity that comes from behind the curtain, accompanied by a series of flashing lights. This sequence repeats a couple of times and then DR. STEIN yells out with triumph from behind the curtain.

DR. STEIN: It's alive!! It's alive!!

DR. STEIN comes out from behind the curtain, jumper cables in his hands, and beckons the creature to come out.

DR. STEIN: You're alive! Rise and come forth!

FRANK

The sound of grunting and moaning comes from behind the curtain, and then a young man walks stiffly into view. FRANK is wearing a long-sleeved 'hospital gown' and has a large scar with stitches drawn completely around his neck. He continues to moan as DR. STEIN sets the jumper cables on the table and beckons him to walk further into the room.

DR. STEIN: Yes! That's it! Come to me, my son!

The young man walks slowly and stiff-legged towards DR. STEIN. He begins to lift his arms in a classic 'Frankenstein' motion and immediately, the arms fall off and rattle to the floor. [NOTE: This can be achieved by having the actor hold the wrists of the fake arms under the robe and just dropping them as he lifts the arms forward.] FRANK frowns and looks down at 'empty' sleeves, then at the plastic arms lying on the floor and starts to cry.

DR. STEIN: That's okay. I can fix that. No problem.

DR. STEIN picks up the fallen arms, tucks them under his arm, and then rushes over to FRANK and pushes him back behind the screen. Once hidden behind the screen, there is the sound of more hammering and sawing.

DR. STEIN: Nothing to it. We'll have you fixed up like new in a jiffy. A little glue here . . . some duct tape there. This may hurt a little. *(There is a loud yelp from behind the curtain.)* Sorry. Okay. You're good as new.

DR. STEIN steps from behind the curtain and once again beckons FRANK to come forth.

DR. STEIN: Come on out, son. Everything is okay now. They won't fall off again.

FRANK walks from behind the curtain, this time rubbing his 'real' arms and bending them to make sure they won't fall off. He looks at DR. STEIN and then in a childlike voice, speaks.

FRANK: Papa?

DR. STEIN runs over and hugs FRANK, jumping for joy at hearing the boy speak.

DR. STEIN: Yes, I am your papa. Oh, how I've dreamed of this day. Of fulfilling the American dream by building my very own son. And now, after all these years, you're finally here. *(He walks up to FRANK and looks him over closely.)* You look okay. How are your arms? They feel okay? *(FRANK bends his arms back and forth.)* What about your legs? You don't know how hard I searched to find two that matched. But, luckily, there was this guy who OD'ed on painkillers in Arizona and I was able to harvest those two in perfect condition.

FRANK bends his legs tentatively, lifting them and doing some deep knee bends. DR. STEIN is overjoyed and claps his hands.

DR. STEIN: The head was a little more difficult. I searched and searched for just the right combination of rugged good looks and superior intelligence. And then, there was this twelve-car pile-up on the interstate and one of the victims just happened to be a young college professor.

DR. STEIN runs over to the chalkboard and writes a long, complicated mathematical formula on the board, then turns to FRANK.

DR. STEIN: Let's see how the brain held up. What's the answer to this equation, son?

FRANK walks over to the chalkboard, looks at the formula, then takes the chalk from DR. STEIN and writes the correct answer to the equation. DR. STEIN once again claps with joy.

DR. STEIN: You're a genius. A genius!

DR. STEIN starts to write another complicated equation. FRANK watches and then asks DR. STEIN a question in a childlike voice.

FRANK: Papa?

DR. STEIN: Yes, son.

FRANK: What's my name?

DR. STEIN: *(He stops writing.)* Why, Frank, of course.

FRANK: *(Slowly repeating the name.)* Frank. My name is Frank?

DR. STEIN: Yes. You're named after me. And your grandfather, the famous Romanian physicist, Dr. Frank N. Stein. I'm Frank Junior . . . well, actually, Doctor Frank Junior and you'll be Frank the Third.

DR. STEIN goes back to writing an equation on the board and FRANK asks another question.

FRANK: Papa?

DR. STEIN: Yes, Frank?

FRANK: Am I a real boy?

DR. STEIN: *(Giving up on writing the formula, he puts down the chalk and hugs FRANK.)* Of course you're a real boy. You're my son. I made you.

FRANK: Made me? You made me?

DR. STEIN: Yes, Frank. I built you from spare parts.

FRANK: But why?

DR. STEIN: What do you mean, why?

FRANK: Why did you make me?

DR. STEIN: Because I love you, Frank. I've always loved you. Even when you were just a big bucket of spare parts, I loved you. Even when all the previous experiments went so horribly wrong and you ate those three people that lived down the street and those two pizza delivery guys, I loved you. But, we did have to move a couple of times after that.

FRANK: (*Confused.*) Pizza delivery guys?

DR. STEIN: Those days are all over now. After all those years of hiding, moving every few months and having to buy spare parts from China and off E-bay, I've finally done everything right and now I have you. My son. (*Walking around FRANK, sizing him up.*) And look at you! Real arms and legs that work without falling off. A liver and spleen that are in pristine condition. Even a completely intact, and working, brain. You're finished and ready to face the world, Frank.

FRANK: Face the world?

DR. STEIN: Yes, Frank. I didn't build you just to stay at home and be my slave. I created you to go into the world and enjoy your life to the fullest.

FRANK stands there for a few moments, not sure what to do next. Finally, he speaks.

FRANK: So, what do I do now?

DR. STEIN: You do what every boy does at your age. You go to high school. You play Xbox and get a cell phone. Create a Facebook page. You're a real boy, Frank, and you're going to enjoy everything there is about being alive.

FRANK: I'm really alive?

DR. STEIN: Well, technically . . . umm . . . no. You're what us mad scientist call one of the walking dead. But that won't stop you from enjoying a full, if technically not really living . . . ah, life.

FRANK: Can I play baseball? I think part of me came from a baseball player?

DR. STEIN: Yeah . . . your right foot. Sky-diving accident. (*Crossing to FRANK and hugging him in a fatherly manner.*) Frank, you can do anything you want. Play baseball, dance the ballet, discover a cure for cancer. You were built from the best of the best . . .

FRANK: Really?

DR. STEIN: Well, technically, I had to go with a lesser quality gallbladder than I wanted, but China was all out of those and I had to harvest it from an . . . an . . . (*Turns away.*) an attorney.

FRANK: (*Gasps.*) What?

DR. STEIN: I know . . . I know. I'm sorry, but that's all there was to choose from. And I'm sure it won't cause you any problems. All that matters is that you're here and you're alive . . . sort of. And so far, you haven't killed or eaten anyone. (*He crosses his fingers dramatically.*) Now, I have just a few more tests to make sure you're really okay. And if everything checks out, then you'll be off to school tomorrow just like any other boy. (*DR. STEIN grabs a clipboard off of the workbench and refers to it as he gives instructions to FRANK.*) Okay. Now stand on one leg. (*FRANK stands on one leg. DR. STEIN checks off the list.*) Balance is good. Okay, cover one eye and read the letters off this chart. (*He picks up a piece of paper the table and holds it up for FRANK who begins to read.*)

FRANK: Dear Dr. Stein, we regret to inform you that because of the recent death and dismemberment of several of our delivery drivers, Domino's Pizza will no longer be able to deliver to your address.

DR. STEIN realizes that his not holding up an eye chart and sets it down so that FRANK stops reading.

DR. STEIN: Oops . . . wrong piece of paper. Okay . . . your vision's good. (*DR. STEIN reaches into the pocket of his lab coat, retrieves a small ball and throws it to FRANK who catches it deftly.*) Reflexes check out. Okay, just one more test. (*DR. STEIN suddenly drops the clipboard, clutches his chest and falls to the floor.*) Oh . . . my heart. I'm having a heart attack! Frank, help me!

FRANK quickly races across the room and kneels down beside DR. STEIN, crying.

FRANK: Oh, Papa. Are you okay? Please don't die!

DR. STEIN sits up and looks at FRANK and it is obvious he has faked his heart attack.

DR. STEIN: Good! You passed the final test, son.

FRANK: You're not dying?

DR. STEIN: *(Getting to his feet.)* No, Frank. I was just faking a heart attack. I'm sorry if I scared you, but before I could allow you to head out into the world on your own, I had to make sure that you were compassionate for others. One hundred and forty-five times I have fallen down and faked a heart attack, and every time, and all the other Franks that I created just stood there. But not you . . . you tried to save me. After all these years, I've finally done it and created a boy with real human compassion.

FRANK: Compassion?

DR. STEIN: Yes, Frank. It means that you care for others just as much as for yourself. That was what was missing in all of the other boys I made. It means that you're more than just a collection of bones, organs and skin, Frank. You're a real person. You're my son. *(DR. STEIN is overjoyed and hugs FRANK.)* Oh, I love you, Frank.

FRANK: I love you too, Papa.

They hug each other for just a moment, then DR. STEIN releases FRANK and straightens his clothes.

DR. STEIN: Now, you've been through a lot today, and tomorrow's your first day at a new school, so I think you should head on up to bed and get some sleep.

FRANK turns and begins to exit stage left, then turns back to DR. STEIN.

FRANK

FRANK: Papa? Did I get any parts from you?

DR. STEIN: *(Walks over to FRANK.)* Only my love, son, and that's the most important part.

FRANK: Goodnight, Papa.

DR. STEIN: Goodnight, Frank.

FRANK exits as DR. STEIN watches. He then pulls out his cell phone, dials and begins to order a pizza.

DR. STEIN: *(Into cell phone.)* Yes, this is Dr. Stein. I would like to order a large sausage pizza. Yes, the address is . . .

FRANK: *(Calling from off stage.)* Are you ordering pizza? I want some pizza!

DR. STEIN: *(Into cell phone.)* You know, maybe this isn't such a good idea. Cancel that order. *(Closes cell phone.)* Goodnight, Frank.

FRANK: *(From off stage.)* Goodnight, Papa.

Curtain closes.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

The setting is the campus of a typical middle or high school. There are several kids standing around waiting for school to start, including a small group of boys who like to pick on the little kids on campus. As the curtain opens, one of the bullies named HENRY has a small kid named PAUL on the ground in a headlock.

HENRY: Come on, Paulie boy. Say it.

PAUL: No!

HENRY: Say it, or I'll rip your head right off.

PAUL: Okay. Okay. You look good in your Mom's skirt.

At this joke, HENRY tightens the headlock and PAUL screams.

HENRY: Say it.

PAUL: Alright. I'm your slave. I will do anything you tell me to.

HENRY: *(To his buddies.)* Including buying my lunch every day for the rest of the year? *(Twisting a little harder.)*

PAUL: Okay . . . I'll buy you lunch every day. Just let me go!

HENRY lets PAUL up off the ground and pushes him towards one of the other boys who push him back and forth between them. Finally, PAUL breaks away and runs off stage right.

HENRY: *(Calling after him.)* We're just having a little fun with ya', Paulie boy. You ain't got to cry.

The group of boys laugh and HENRY wipes off the knees of his pants from where he soiled them on the ground. Just then, FRANK enters from stage left, carrying a "Hello Kitty" book bag and looking at his new class schedule. One of the boys punches HENRY and points him out.

CARL: Hey, check out the fresh meat, Henry.

HENRY: Oh, this is going to be fun.

The group of boys swaggers over to FRANK and HENRY snatches the schedule from his hands.

HENRY: Well, well . . . looks like we got us a new girl on campus.

He snatches FRANK's book bag out of his hands and looks through it quickly.

HENRY: What's your name, little girl?

FRANK: *(Looking at HENRY confused.)* I'm not a girl. I was built using the correct male anatomical parts.

HENRY: *(Slinging the book bag back at FRANK, who catches it.)* Anatomy what? Sounds like a smart little girl to me, don't he boys? What's your name?

FRANK: Frank.

CARL: Funny name for a girl. *(The other boys laugh until HENRY shuts them up with a harsh look.)*

HENRY: I'll make the jokes around here, if you don't mind, Carl.

CARL: Sorry, Henry.

HENRY: Frank, huh? *(He looks at FRANK's schedule.)* Says here that you're taking Advanced Chemistry, European History, and . . . *(He hands the schedule over to CARL for help.)* What's that word, Carl?

CARL: Ah . . . *(Sounding it out phonetically.)* Ca-cool-loose.

LESTER: Cal-coon-list?

FRANK: It's pronounced 'calculus.' It's the study of limits, derivatives, integrals and the sums of infinite series.

CARL: Infinite what?

HENRY: Sounds like you think you're smarter than us, Frank. You think you're smarter than me?

FRANK: No.

HENRY: How about Tony here? You think you're smarter than him? I bet you can't tell from looking at him, but he skipped kindergarten.

TONY: Uh-huh. I knew my colors when I was three. *(He walks over to FRANK waving three fingers in his face.)* Three! What do ya' think about that? Three!

TONY walks back to the group where all the boys pat TONY on the back and encourage him with “yeah” and “way to go.” HENRY pushes him menacingly.

HENRY: That’s right. Three, smart boy.

LESTER: I thought you said he was a girl, Henry?

HENRY: *(Pushing Lester.)* Who asked you what you thought, Lester?

FRANK: You know, violence isn’t the only way to solve your differences. You should consider using empathetic negotiation.

HENRY: *(Turning to FRANK.)* What did you call me?

CARL: I heard him call you pathetic.

HENRY: Pathetic? Is that what you called me? Pathetic? *(Turning to TONY.)* What does that mean, Tony?

TONY: I don’t know. All I know is my colors.

FRANK: I’m sorry. You must have misunderstood me. What I said was . . .

HENRY reaches out and grabs FRANK’s collar and raises his arm to hit him.

HENRY: Oh, I heard what you said, smart boy. And it’s gonna’ be pretty hard to talk that fancy talk when you’re missing a few teeth.

HENRY raises his hand to FRANK’s neck like he is going to choke FRANK. FRANK who reaches out and grabs it, and quickly turns HENRY around, bending his arm painfully up his back. HENRY screams with pain.

CARL: Stop it! You’re hurting him.

LESTER/TONY: Yeah. Stop it.

FRANK finally releases HENRY’s arm, who rubs it in pain.

FRANK: I told you that violence is not the best way to solve problems. Now give me back my schedule.

CARL quickly hands the schedule over to FRANK and then grabs HENRY and helps him walk away. HENRY calls back towards FRANK after they are a safe distance away.

HENRY: This ain't over, smart boy. Not by a long shot! You better watch your back!

FRANK watches them go, then examines his class schedule more closely, looking around and trying to figure out where to go. He looks for a map of the school in his book bag and accidentally drops it on the ground, scattering the books. Just as he bends down to pick up the fallen books, three girls enter together from stage left talking to each other. As they pass HENRY, two of the girls laugh and point at him. The other girl, MARY, is part of the school's "Emo Group" and is dressed in torn jeans, a punk rock t-shirt and is carrying a skateboard. Her hair is spiked, and she is wearing dark eyeliner and black nail polish. MARY is considered a freak by most of the kids at school who don't know her, but she is really very smart and nice. That's why, when the other girls laugh at FRANK, she stops to help.

MARY: (To her friends.) I'll catch up with you guys later.

SHERRY: Okay. See you in math.

MARY's friends look at Frank and giggle, then continue across the stage and exit. MARY looks over at FRANK and then walks over to him, bending down to help him pick up his books.

MARY: Hi.

FRANK: Oh, hi.

MARY: Let me help you with those books.

FRANK: Thanks.

MARY: You must be new here?

FRANK: Yeah. Today's my first day.

They get the last of the books and stand up together. MARY sticks out her hand to introduce herself.

MARY: Well, welcome to our humble school. I'm Mary. Mary Shelley.

FRANK: My name's Frank.

MARY: (*Shaking hands with FRANK.*) Pleased to meet you, Frank.

MARY hands over FRANK's calculus book.

MARY: Calculus, huh? You must have come from a really good school.

FRANK: Yeah, I guess.

MARY: You guess?

FRANK: I mean, yeah . . . I did.

MARY: Well, it must have been from somewhere far away from this little hick town. You don't sound like you came from around here. Where was your last school?

FRANK: My last school?

MARY: Yeah. Where'd you transfer from?

FRANK: Ah . . . France.

MARY: France? Really?

FRANK: Ah. Yeah.

MARY: You were born there?

FRANK: Oh, no. I was built in America.

MARY: Built in America? What?

FRANK: Ah . . . I mean, born in America. Me and my papa just moved back here . . . from France.

MARY: That's cool. You know, I took French in the seventh grade, hoping to one day meet Johnny Depp. He lives in France, you know.

FRANK: (*Looking confused.*) Who?

MARY: Johnny Depp. Like only the most famous and gorgeous movie star in the whole world. *Pirates of the Caribbean?* Captain Jack Sparrow?

FRANK: He's a bird?

MARY: No, he's an actor.

FRANK: I thought you just said he's a pirate?

MARY: He's an actor that plays a pirate in the movies. He's dreamy and one day, I'm going to meet him. That's why I took French. Let's see if I can remember my vocabulary. *Como tally vous?*

FRANK: Huh?

MARY: I just said 'how are you' in French. You do speak French, don't you?

FRANK: Well, not really. We lived in the country . . . and . . . ah, we didn't have a TV.

MARY: Oh.

FRANK nervously reaches up and scratches at the stitches around his neck.

MARY: So, where'd you get the cool scar?

FRANK: Scar?

MARY: Yeah. Around your neck. That must have been some wicked accident.

FRANK: Oh, this? I . . . ah . . . cut myself shaving.

MARY: Shaving. You're not very good at it.

FRANK: Yeah. I'm not really used to my new arms yet.

MARY: What?

FRANK: I mean . . . I just started shaving . . . with my arms, you know.

MARY: Yeah, so much easier than with your feet, right?

FRANKS laughs nervously at the joke and there's a moment of uncomfortable silence. A couple of students walk by and say hello to MARY.

LINLEY: Hey, Mary. Who's the new kid?

BRIAN: Nice book bag, man. Not many dudes can pull off Hello Kitty.

MARY: This is Frank. He's from France.

LINLEY: Oh, cool. Accueillez, Franc. (*Ak-u-lay.*)

FRANK: What?

MARY: She said 'welcome Frank.'

BRIAN: I thought you said this dude moved here from France?

MARY: Ah, he didn't have a TV.

BRIAN: Didn't have a TV?

FRANK: We lived in the country.

BRIAN: So? I went to Europe with my parents last summer and there was TV everywhere . . . even in the country.

LINLEY: Quel âge avez-vous ? (*Kel-a-jay ava-vu.*)

FRANK: Huh?

LINLEY: I just asked you 'how old you are.'

MARY: You know, guys, Frank just got here. I'm sure that it has been hard getting used to moving to New Mexico after living in France. So why don't we give him a break, okay.

LINLEY: Alright. But if you're going to tell everyone that you're from France . . . you might want to learn a couple of basic French words, okay? Au revoir. (*A ree-vuar.*)

FRANK: What?

LINLEY: Forget it. Come on Brian. We're late for class.

LINLEY and BRIAN begin to leave. BRIAN turns back towards FRANK before he exits, pointing at the "Hello Kitty" book bag.

BRIAN: And dude, I'd get me a different book bag if I were you. Something a little more . . . masculine. Okay, Frenchie?

FRANK: My name's Frank.

MARY waves goodbye to her friends and turns to FRANK. She changes the subject quickly.

MARY: So, you got any hobbies, Frank. I mean, what did you like to do when you were in France?

FRANK: I don't know. I like experimenting with electricity. Organ transplantation. And learning about skin grafts.

MARY: What?

FRANK: And baseball.

MARY: Oh, cool. I like baseball. Especially the Yankees.

FRANK: The what?

MARY: The Yankees. The baseball team from New York.

FRANK: Oh.

Two more students walk by. One of them looks at FRANK and MARY and calls them freaks, then they laugh and continue on to class.

MARY: I get that all the time. Don't let them bother you. The kids at this school can be real jerks sometimes.

FRANK: That's okay. I know that I'm a little . . . different.

MARY: Hey, different is cool. I mean, look at me. I'm definitely different. I know people laugh at the way I dress and my hair. They call me a skater punk, but I don't care. I like being different. It's what makes life interesting.

FRANK: Yeah. I guess. (*Pointing to his neck.*) At least you don't have any scars.

MARY: Sure I do. Check this out. (*MARY holds up her elbow for FRANK to see.*) That's some pretty radical road rash right there. Got it riding down a hand rail at the post office. Now that's going to be a wicked scar.

FRANK: Are people afraid of you?

MARY: Afraid of me? Why would they be afraid of me?

FRANK: Well, people have always been afraid of me because I'm different.

MARY: You know, I've never thought of it that way. I guess some people are afraid of me. They probably think that just because I wear black eyeliner and ride a skateboard, I must be some kind of stoner or something. I don't get invited to very many parties or to spend the night at other kids' houses.

FRANK: Me neither. I've never had a friend.

MARY: Well, you have one now, Frank. You know, you and I are a lot more alike than you think.

FRANK: What do you mean?

MARY: We're unique. Trendsetters. While everybody else is out there trying to look alike, dress alike and talk alike, we're cool. The French Dude and the Skater Chick.

FRANK: Sounds like a TV show.

MARY: And maybe one day it will be. It'd be like *CSI* or something. I'd chase down the suspects on my board and you'd solve the crimes in the lab using your . . . what were your hobbies?

FRANK: Organ transplantation and skin grafts?

MARY: Yeah. That sounds like the kind of stuff they do on *CSI*.

FRANK: And electro-shock therapy?

MARY: Well, I don't know about that, but maybe. Hey, you want to hang out after school?

FRANK: Hang out?

MARY: Yeah. After school, I can show you around our sleepy little town. It's not the French countryside, but it's pretty cool. I might even buy you a milkshake down at the Dairy Queen. You in?

FRANK: You really want to be my friend?

MARY: Yeah. We're two of kind, remember? What do you say? Meet me here after school?

FRANK: I guess it will be okay. We won't be out too late will we? I don't want my papa to worry.

MARY: I'll have you home in time for him to read you a bedtime story and tuck you in long before dark.

FRANK: Well, okay.

MARY: Alright, Frank from France. Meet you here right after the last bell. Don't be late.

FRANK: I won't.

MARY: And Frank? You might want to cover up that scar. Most people aren't as understanding about things like that as me. D'accord? (*Da-cord.*)

FRANK: Huh?

MARY: That's French for 'okay'? (*They start to exit together stage right.*) I can't believe you're really from France and you don't know who Johnny Depp is.

FRANK: We didn't have TV.

MARY: I know . . . I know . . . jeez!

Curtain closes.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

Curtain opens to reveal DR. STEIN's laboratory. He has cleaned up a little, but there are still several instruments on the table and papers scattered around. The blackboard is also still covered with scientific equations and anatomical drawings. Above the human figure has now been drawn the word "FRANK" in big letters. MARY and FRANK enter from stage right, laughing.

MARY: Wow! This is your house?

FRANK: Yes. And my father's . . . ah . . . laboratory.

MARY: *(Walking over and looking at the instruments on the table and the chalkboard.)* Is he like a mad scientist or something?

FRANK: *(Rushing over and trying to clean up some of the mess.)*
Yeah, something like that. He's a doctor.

MARY: Oh really? What kind?

MARY turns her attention to the chalkboard and FRANK quickly rushes over and erases his name from above the figure.

FRANK: Ah. *(Thinking.)* He's a dentist.

MARY: Cool. I just got my braces off. See how straight my teeth are?
(She beams a big smile toward FRANK.)

FRANK: Yes, you have very pretty teeth. Where'd you buy them?

MARY starts to question what FRANK means by that when DR. STEIN, hearing the kids, calls from offstage left.

DR. STEIN: Frank? Is that you?

FRANK: Yes, Papa. I'm in here.

DR. STEIN enters, reading a large scientific textbook and not seeing MARY.

DR. STEIN: No problems at school today? Your arms didn't fall off again, did they?

FRANK: Ah . . . no Papa. (*MARY looks at him strangely again and FRANK laughs nervously, then clears his throat to get his father's attention.*) Ah, Papa . . . I'd like for you to meet my new friend, Mary. Mary Shelley.

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